CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1 - 20. (canceled)

21. (currently amended) A method of operating a spinneret having a multiplicity of spinning apertures through which a molten plastic is forced to form filaments, the method comprising the steps of:

a) closing dirt-contaminated or clogged spinning apertures of the spinneret with plugs consisting at least in part of at least one oxidizable binder substance consisting at least partially of amorphous carbon which, upon oxidative decomposition, is destroyed;

b) subjecting at least a portion of the device containing the apertures and the plugs to a pyrolysis treatment for breakdown of residual plastic on the portion of the device; [[and]]

c) thereafter subjecting the portion of the device to an oxidative treatment to oxidize ~~the substance~~ and destroy the binder substance of the plugs and reduce the plugs to ash; and

d) cleaning the ash from the portion.

22. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 21 wherein the plugs consist of graphite and the oxidizable substance.

23. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 21 wherein the pyrolysis treatment of step b) is carried out at a subatmospheric pressure.

24. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 23 wherein the pyrolysis treatment of step b) is carried out under inert conditions.

25. (currently amended) The method defined in claim [[24]] 21 wherein the oxidative treatment of step c) is carried out at a temperature above 100°C in the presence of at least one oxidizing medium.

26. (currently amended) The method defined in claim [[25]] 21 wherein the oxidative treatment is carried out at a temperature above 150°C.

27. (currently amended) The method defined in claim 26 wherein the oxidative treatment is carried out at a temperature between [[210°C]] 200°C and 600°C.

28. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 27 wherein the oxidative treatment is carried out at a temperature of 250°C to 550°C.

29. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 28 wherein the oxidative treatment is carried out at a temperature of 350°C to 500°C.

30. (currently amended) The method defined in claim [[29]] 21 wherein the oxidizing medium is air or pure oxygen.

31. (currently amended) The method defined in claim [[30]] 21 wherein the oxidative treatment is carried out at a reduced pressure.

32. (currently amended) The method defined in claim [[31]] 21 wherein the portion is cleaned ~~following at least one of the treatments~~ in an ultrasound bath.

33. (currently amended) The method defined in claim [[32]] 21 wherein the portion is cleaned ~~following at least one of the treatments~~ with a high-pressure cleaner.

34. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 21 wherein the pyrolysis treatment of step b) is carried out at a subatmospheric pressure.

35. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 21 wherein the pyrolysis treatment of step b) is carried out under inert conditions.

36. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 21 wherein the oxidative treatment of step c) is carried out at a temperature between 350°C to 500°C in the presence of at least one oxidizing medium selected from the group consisting of air, oxygen-enriched air and pure oxygen.

37 - 38. (canceled)